



Board Meeting Digest

Monday, Nov. 23, 2009 Regular Meeting of the Board

DELEGATIONS/SPECIAL PRESENTATIONS

A delegation from the St. Therese School of Faith and Mission in Bruno spoke to the board. The delegation included Jerry Kristian, Chair of Directors; Andras Than, Executive Director; and Jim Anderson, Director, who requested that trustees consider approving St. Therese as an associate school of Greater Saskatoon Catholic Schools. St. Therese's mission "is to offer Christian formation in an environment of prayer and scripture study." The school began in 2007 at the Ursuline Academy.

Board Chair Diane Boyko indicated that the division would investigate the possibility of considering the request, which would first need to meet regulations set out in the province's Education Act.

See [The StarPhoenix article](#) about this request.

DISCUSSION/DECISION

Panel on Student Achievement: Component 5 – Effective Practices and Component 6 – Equity for All Students

The Provincial Panel on Student Achievement was established by the Minister of Education in 2008 to "provide the Minister of Education with approximately 10-20 recommendations for improving student achievement in Saskatchewan." The panel is comprised of Ministry of Education officials, school board members, K-12 teachers, educational administrators, university officials, representatives of First Nations and Métis education authorities and other educational leaders.

Stakeholders, like our Board of Education, have been asked to hold a "focused conversation" on several foundational components:

- First Nations and Métis Education,
- Community Engagement,
- Early Learning and Child Care,
- Sustainable Learning Organizations,
- Effective Practices, and
- Equity for All Students.

The panel will make its recommendations by mid-February 2010. The [two-page PDF overview](#) of panel's work is posted on the Saskatchewan School Board's Association website.

Improving student learning and achievement monitoring report

One of the four priorities of the Board of Education, developed in 2007, is Improving Student Learning and Achievement.

Under this priority, several initiatives have been undertaken. Because board meeting agendas do not allow time to review all work that is under way in this area, Learning Services superintendents have chosen to highlight four areas of focus at the Nov. 23 and Dec. 7 Board meetings:

- High School Reculturing (Nov. 23)
- Early Learning (Nov. 23)
- K-5 Mathematics (Dec. 4)
- High school Advanced Placement (Dec. 4)

High School Reculturing – Supt. John McAuliffe outlined several aspects of high school reculturing that are under way. These include our division’s participation in the *What Did You Do In School Today* (WDYDIST) research project, in which students are surveyed to determine how schools can respond when young people disengage from school, and how to challenge confident, engaged students.

Trustees also learned how Teacher Advisory Programs like Teacher Guardian Groups at St. Joseph and 360 at Bethlehem fit into reculturing. TAPs see students assigned to a home room teacher for their entire high school career; these groups meet daily.

Bethlehem Assistant Principal Kim Paslawski described the *Commitment to Graduate* program at Bethlehem Catholic High School, in which Grade 9 students are encouraged to set a goal of graduating from Grade 12. A message from Principal Scott Gay and a student-produced video about the importance of graduating were presented to students before they were asked to sign a graduation gown as a symbol of their commitment to graduate.

The Commitment to Graduate program was the second item in [The StarPhoenix’s Education Notebook](#) feature on Nov. 27.

Early Learning and Child Care – Supt. Joanne Weninger and Early Learning Consultant Bonnie Mihalicz presented the belief statements developed by the Early Learning and Child Care team and explained the team’s plans for 2009-2010 which include enhanced support for pre-K and K teachers, ensuring pre-K and K classrooms are welcoming for students and families and communicating the mission and work of the Early Learning and Child Care team.

St. Frances Pre-K teacher Lori Hepp then discussed how she is using Documentation as a tool in her classroom. Documentation – through displays of items like photographs, artifacts, charts and questions – shows parents and others what children know and what they are learning.

New five-year capital building plan approved

Don Lloyd, Superintendent – Administrative Services, presented the division’s [Five-Year Capital and School Facility Plan](#). The plan consists of 11 projects – renovation and new school construction – totaling \$114,540,000 million.

Trustee Ron Boechler requested that the list be updated to include the year that a project was submitted to the Ministry of Education. When the division submits a substantial update to the ministry regarding a project, the list will reflect the year the new information was submitted.

It should be noted that the projects included on the division's list are not ranked by our division's administration. The Ministry of Education assesses all projects submitted from across the province and issues its priority list each July. This [PDF list](#) is available on the Ministry of Education's website in the Education Finance & Facilities section.

Pandemic preparedness/response update

Supt. Al Boutin updated trustees regarding the school division's response to the H1N1 pandemic. The response included an increased focus on educating staff, students and family about best practices to stop the spread of influenza and the work done by caretaking staff in cleaning schools. Supt. Boutin also reviewed our division's ongoing communication with the Saskatoon Health Region to report absences at our schools and to coordinate vaccination clinics at our schools and Prairieland Park.

Trustees reviewed two graphs showing staff and student absences in October and November. [Links to the graphs are available here.](#)

Supt. Boutin shared that while Professional Development and daytime meetings had been cancelled in order to ease the strain on our pool of replacement staff. This restriction has now been lifted.

Read [The StarPhoenix story](#) about this report.

Trustees approve ground lease for Holy Family Cathedral

Trustees voted that the division will lease, for one dollar, 5.75 acres of land near St. Joseph High School to the Episcopal Corporation of Saskatoon, which is the legal name for the Saskatoon Roman Catholic Diocese. The diocese is building the new Holy Family Cathedral on the site. The land was previously used as a practice field by St. Joseph's football team, which will now practise across the street on the artificial turf at the SaskTel Sports Centre.

The lease was also part of [The StarPhoenix's Education Notebook](#) article.

Fortosky new vice-president of Saskatchewan Catholic School Boards Association

Board members congratulated Trustee Tom Fortosky, who was elected, by acclamation, as vice-president of the Saskatchewan Catholic School Boards Association.

Risling receives Saskatchewan School Boards Association Award of Distinction

Trustees congratulated colleague Alice Risling, who learned she would be receiving the association's award which is presented annually to a member of the association who has demonstrated outstanding service and made a significant contribute to enhance education. This was the final item in [The Education Notebook](#).